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10/569,559	02/27/2006	Joseph W. Stolle	2003UR033	5349

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EXAMINER

HEWITT, JAMES M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

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12/09/2010

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/569,559	Applicant(s) STOLLE ET AL.	
	Examiner JAMES M. HEWITT	Art Unit 3679	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10/1/10.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 17-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4-7 and 9-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10/1/10 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/1/10 has been entered.

Election/Restrictions

Claims 17-25 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

Drawings

The drawings were received on 10/1/2010. These drawings are acceptable.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 8 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 1, line 6, "said pre-defined axial alignment" should be "a pre-defined axial alignment".

In claim 8, line 10, "said pre-defined axial alignment" should be "a pre-defined axial alignment".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-10 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hughes (US 5,950,744).

Hughes discloses a pipe joint for self aligning a drill string, tubing string or casing string of the type comprising a plurality of drill pipe, tubing or casing sections arranged in end to end relation from a location above the ground to a lower location adjacent a tool connected to a bottom end of the string and wherein the adjacent ends of the sections are connected to each other to form a plurality of spaced joints extending downwardly from the ground to the tool, the improvement wherein each joint comprises an upper section having at least one downwardly projecting extension and a lower

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section having a corresponding recess for receiving the extension and wherein the extension and the recess can fit together in only one way.

Hughes employs pins, legs and keys (spacers/nipples) that mate corresponding recesses and slots (openings/nipple recipients) in order to align and join the sections in one way. The connection collar (18) includes internal straight threads, as shown in the figures.

As in the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 18-20, none of the first set of threads (94) overlap with any of the second set of threads (96).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 11-12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes (US 5,950,744).

As to claim 11, Hughes fails to teach that both of the components are notched. Yet it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to notch both of Hughes' components since Applicant has attributed no absolute criticality to notching both components and states "Additionally first component 10 and second component 20 can be fabricated such that there is essentially no external diameter upset (i.e., there is substantially constant external diameter across the connection)."

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As to claim 12, Hughes fails to teach that the components are covered with a suitable coating to protect from galling or corrosion. Examiner takes official notice of the provision of coatings on oil country tubular goods, and accordingly it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide a suitable coating on Hughes' components in order to protect the components from galling or corrosion.

As to claim 15, Hughes fails to teach a first seal configured to be disposed between the first component and the connection collar; and a second seal configured to be disposed between the second component and the connection collar, wherein the first seal and second seal isolate the first set of threads and the second set of threads from a region external to connection collar. Examiner takes official notice of the use of seals between threaded components in order to isolate the threads. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify Hughes to provide a first seal configured to be disposed between the first component and the connection collar; and a second seal configured to be disposed between the second component and the connection collar in order to isolate the first set of threads and the second set of threads from a region external to connection collar.

Claims 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes (US 5,950,744) in view of Hughes (US 2005/0023831 A1).

Hughes '744 fails to teach a plurality of openings in the first component and a plurality of openings in the second component, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the

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first component and the second component. Hughes '831 teaches a similar drill pipe joint that employs openings in a first component and a plurality of openings in the second component for wire or other material for transmitting power and data between the joined sections, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the first component and the second component. Refer to FIGS. 22-28 and [0071]-[0072]. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify Hughes '744 with a plurality of openings in the first component and a plurality of openings in the second component for wire or other material, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the first component and the second component as taught by Hughes '831 in order to transmit power and data between the joined sections.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 8 would be allowable if amended to overcome the above-noted objection.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 10/1/10 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Hughes '744 fails to teach or suggest a connection having straight threaded first and second components that do not have overlapping threads.

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Examiner disagrees. Refer to the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 18-20, wherein none of the first set of threads (94) overlap with any of the second set of threads (96).

Conclusion

An RCE has been filed in the instant application. All claims are drawn to the same invention and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action in this case. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no, however, event will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAMES M. HEWITT whose telephone number is (571)272-7084. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 930am-600pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/James M Hewitt/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679